



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

## Grassley Urges U.S. Case Over Ban on Ag Biotech Products

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, late yesterday sent a letter to the United States Trade Representative, repeating his request that the Administration file a World Trade Organization case against the European Union regarding that government's moratorium on the approval of new agricultural biotechnology products. Grassley said the end of the war with Iraq removes one of the Administration's stated reasons for delaying a case.

The text of Grassley's letter follows.

April 28, 2003

The Honorable Robert B. Zoellick  
U.S. Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Zoellick:

I am writing to urge the Administration to promptly initiate dispute settlement proceedings at the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the European Union regarding that government's moratorium on the approval of new agricultural biotechnology products.

For over four and a half years, the European Union has failed to approve new agricultural biotechnology products for entry into the European market. Yet officials of the European Union admit that products for which they are denying approvals are safe. The European Union's refusal to approve safe products for entry into its market violates its WTO obligations.

The European Union's moratorium continues to adversely impact U.S. farmers, including corn producers in Iowa. The United States cannot afford to sit idly by as exports of U.S. agricultural products to the European Union remain blocked. It is essential that the United States enforce its WTO rights.

Moreover, as you are aware, the European Union's refusal to approve new biotechnology products has contributed to the spread of anti-biotechnology hysteria to other parts of the world. Of particular concern, countries in southern Africa with starving populations recently rejected shipments of humanitarian aid consisting of U.S. corn due to unfounded fears over modern biotechnology. The international community must become further aware both of the WTO inconsistency of the European Union's policies as well as the safety of biotechnology products. A WTO action would help achieve these ends.

I remain extremely frustrated that the Administration has yet to file a WTO case. I have spoken with you on various occasions on the importance of initiating dispute settlement proceedings at the WTO. I have raised this issue in a letter to the President, in a conversation with another member of the Cabinet, and in discussions with high-ranking White House officials. I have yet to receive an adequate response on this matter from you or others in the Administration.

I understand that some in the Administration wanted to postpone a WTO case until after Iraq was liberated. Saddam Hussein's regime has now been deposed. Accordingly, I see no reason for putting off a WTO challenge. The United States should promptly initiate a WTO action.

I look forward to a reply from you on this most critical issue.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

cc: The Honorable Donald L. Evans  
The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
The Honorable Ann M. Veneman